



DECLARATION OF COOPERATION

The Sustainable Plant Research and Outreach Center (SPROUT)

May 2004

I. Background

The Oregon Garden Foundation, with help from a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is establishing a Sustainable Plant Research and Outreach Center (SPROUT), a partnership between the Oregon Garden Foundation, The Institute for Natural Resources, Oregon State University, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA), and a number of other public and private institutions.

Mission

The core mission of SPROUT is to develop the use of plants and plant material for environmental sustainability purposes, through the development of new techniques, new plants, and new propagation methods.

SPROUT will sponsor on-site research in this emerging field, engaging in partnerships with practitioners and researchers, and providing matching funds for on-site research and demonstration. SPROUT will provide outreach on research results, and actively work to integrate research efforts with public policy and business development.

Vision

SPROUT's larger purpose is to make Oregon an international center for the research and development of plants for environmental purposes, creating linkages between researchers and practitioners and creating new business opportunities. By advancing knowledge and encouraging new investment in this developing technology, SPROUT can play a critical role both in Oregon's economy and in protecting our environment.

Priority Research areas and "Niches"

The Oregon Garden Foundation contracted with *Oregon Solutions* to identify potential partners and priority research areas for the Center. A series of interviews conducted with professionals in the "sustainability" field led to a draft business plan that was presented at the January 26, 2004 meeting of the SPROUT Research Council. The plan recommended the following areas for SPROUT's initial focus:

- Phytoremediation
- Wetlands Treatment of Wastewater
- Native Plant Restoration/Controlling invasive species
- Riparian Area Restoration
- Urban Stormwater/Ecoscaping

Subsequent to the first Research Council meeting, a more “strategic” document was produced that examined in greater detail some of the operational aspects of SPROUT. (see attachment) This Strategic Planning document identified three potential “niche” areas. Focusing on these niches would *not* preclude SPROUT from engaging in research or activities outside these areas if opportunities presented themselves. However, SPROUT’s greatest value-added (and subsequently, it’s ability to attract research funding) may come from focusing or emphasizing these “niche” activities.

- *Researching “active” uses of plants for environmental purposes:* This involves the design and use of “the right plant in the right place” for environmental purposes. “Active” uses include plant uptake for wastewater treatment, phytoremediation of contaminants in water and soil, and treatment of both urban and agricultural runoff. Working plants may be either native or non-native species.
- *Research coupled with outreach;* While most organizations emphasize one or the other, SPROUT’s partnership with the Oregon Garden as well as major research institutions presents some unique opportunities. This role is not unlike that of the Cooperative Extension service, with the focus on the use of plant material to address environmental concerns. In this role, SPROUT will build upon and broaden the current visitor base at the Oregon Garden that appeals largely to the home gardener. SPROUT may also “demonstrate” and display at the Garden research undertaken by partnering organizations at other locations.
- *A clearinghouse on the use of plants for environmental purposes.* SPROUT can build upon its existing partnerships with other institutions to actively build a network of scientists, practitioners, policy-makers, educators, and the business community. In this role, SPROUT would link research to public education, public policy-making, and new business opportunities. For example, as a center of technology transfer, linking researchers and practitioners, SPROUT could provide regular training and workshops to professionals and practitioners in the field; it could promote the use of new research in this field into the horticultural curriculum at institutions of higher learning; and it could link entrepreneurs and business investors with promising new methods or new plants for environmental purposes.

II. UUUUUUUDescription of the Sustainable Plant Research and Outreach Center

SPROUT will be housed at the Oregon Garden, which will provide financial management and staffing. The Center will be a partnership between the Oregon Garden Foundation, Oregon State University, The Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA), and the institutions represented on the Research Council, listed below.

SPROUT is not currently a separate legal entity, but rather a program at the Oregon Garden that involves the Oregon Garden Foundation, the Institute for Natural Resources, Oregon State University, and a host of other institutional partners. Therefore, any formal agreements involved in the research partnerships will primarily be between the Oregon Garden Foundation and other parties.

A Research Council, consisting of representatives from the institutional partners, will meet at least once per year with primary responsibilities to review on-going research, develop potential research partnerships, support grant efforts, and recommend research priorities and new partnerships for research.

The initial membership on the SPROUT Research Council will be:

Thayne Dutson – Oregon State University
Gail Achterman – Institute for Natural Resources
Anita Azarenko – Horticulture Dept, OSU
Lyla Houglum – OSU Extension Service
Rob Miller – Oregon Garden Foundation
Jack Long – Oregon Garden Foundation
Mark Krautmann – Oregon Association of Nurseries
Ann Murphy – Oregon Association of Nurseries
George Bear – Oregon Association of Nurseries
Bob Graham, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Dianne Guidry – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Rob Tracey – NRCS Plant Materials Center
Katy Coba – Oregon Department of Agriculture
Geoff Huntington – Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Janet Gillaspie - Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies
Tom Liptan – City of Portland, Bureau of Environmental Services
John Baldwin - Institute for a Sustainable Environment, U of O
Ralph Fisher – Oregon grass seed industry
Gretchen Schuette – Chemeketa Community College
Pat Willis, Jackson Bottom Wetlands
Monte Graham – Marion Soil and Water Conservation District

The primary activity of SPROUT will be to sponsor on-site research on the application of plants/plant material to address environmental concerns. The Center will *not* conduct research independently, but will engage in partnerships with practitioners, researchers, educators, and regulatory agencies.

What SPROUT brings to these partnerships is:

- Space for field-testing and field plots, with several different planting environments in a single location: conifer forest, oak grove, upland prairie, and (constructed) wetlands.
- Technology transfer opportunities from multiple research and demonstration projects (SPROUT's clearinghouse function also provides the ability to recruit several partners for the same research project). In addition, the ability to link research with both practice and the development of business opportunities.
- An ability to identify research needs and new topics because of the broad representation on the Research Council, including both scientific institutions as well as practitioners.
- Tremendous public exposure and outreach opportunities, because of the location at the Oregon Garden with its thousands of annual visitors and outreach programs.
- Funding to help with research. The Oregon Garden Foundation currently has a grant from NRCS which includes matching funds to research partners, and expects to receive grants for similar research partnerships in the future.

What SPROUT relies on its research partners to supply:

- Highly qualified research scientists
- Practitioners with years of experience in the application of gained knowledge
- Laboratory and greenhouse facilities, if needed: Much of the research on the active environmental uses of plants (i.e. using their biological functions) involves a combination of facilities. In addition to field sites, needed facilities may include lab capabilities for tissue culture, tracer work, and controlled isolation of processes. For at least the immediate future, these additional facilities will need to be off-site.
- Cooperation with obtaining matching funds

III. The Oregon Solutions Collaborative Process

- Begins with a problem or opportunity defined by the community – *The opportunity to develop a center for research and outreach on the use of plants for environmental purposes at the Oregon Garden.*
- Chaired by a community convener identified by Oregon’s Governor – *Thayne Dutson*
- Uses a collaborative process involving a team of federal, state, and local governments; business, and non-profits. *Steve Greenwood and Jackie Dingfelder were contracted to help facilitate the development of SPROUT.*
- Works toward an integrated solution that leverages the resources of the team.
- Results in a signed declaration of cooperation.

IV. Declaration of Cooperation:

This Declaration of Cooperation, while not a legally binding contract, is a statement of the good faith and commitment of the undersigned parties, who agree to the following actions in the development of the Sustainable Plant Research and Outreach Center:

- There shall be established a Sustainable Plant Research and Outreach Center (SPROUT), which will be a partnership between the Oregon Garden Foundation, Oregon State University, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA), and a number of other public and private institutions.
- The core mission of SPROUT is to develop the use of plants and plant material for environmental sustainability purposes, through the development of new techniques, new plants, and new propagation methods.
- SPROUT will sponsor on-site research in this emerging field, engaging in partnerships with practitioners and researchers, and providing matching funds for on-site research and demonstration. SPROUT will provide

outreach on research results, and actively work to integrate research efforts with public policy and business development.

- Oregon Garden will provide: staffing and initial financial management; a representative on the SPROUT Research Council; development and maintenance of a SPROUT website; a location and audience for SPROUT research and outreach efforts; and coordination of the development of outreach materials and activities.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has provided initial funding to establish SPROUT and help fund initial research: \$325,000 in 2003 and \$325,000 in 2004.
- Oregon State University will coordinate its research and outreach related to the use of plants for environmental sustainability purposes with SPROUT.
- The Institute for Natural Resources has offered to provide administrative services related to SPROUT research funding, including solicitation and evaluation of proposals, identifying available research funding, and grant administration. (Subject to further discussion and agreement with OGF)
- All other members of the Research Council will:
 - Attend Research Council meetings 1-2 times per year
 - Help identify research needs and recommend research priorities, as appropriate
 - Develop and participate in research partnerships, as appropriate
 - Support SPROUT grant applications, through financial or in-kind contributions, letters, etc.
 - Help recruit and recommend new research partners
 - Attend and provide expertise and support for, as appropriate, the Sustainable Plant Workshops and Conferences
 - Share information about current research that may be appropriate for outreach or demonstration through SPROUT
 - Identify and recommend outreach targets and methods, as appropriate



Oregon Garden Foundation




Oregon State University



NRCS



Institute for Natural Resources



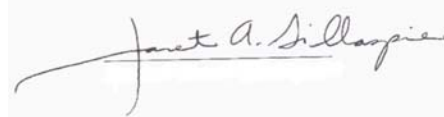
Chemeketa Community College



U of O Institute for Sustainable Env.



Oregon Assoc. of Nurseries



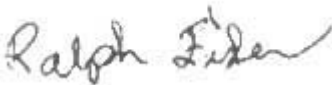
Assoc. of Clean Water Agencies



Jackson Bottom Wetlands



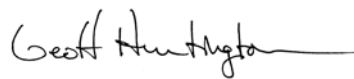
Oregon Dept. of Agriculture



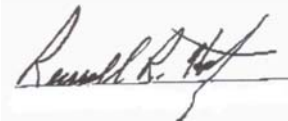
Oregon Seed Council



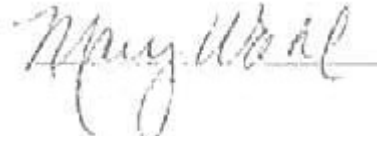
OSU Extension Service



OWEB



NRCS Plant Materials Center



City of Portland B.E.S.



OSU College of Agricultural Science



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